(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise, with particular reference to UP;

(c) the details of the action taken against the culprits since last 3 years;

(d) whether in this illegal felling, officials of his Ministry are also involved; and

(e) if so, the details alongwith the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) There is no report regarding large scale illegal felling of trees in the country. However, incidences of illicit felling do take place and the action is taken by the respective State/UT Governments.

(b) The State-wise details of incidences of illicit felling for last three years are being collected.

(c) The action against the offender is taken by the respective State Government as per prevailing Rules/Regulations.

(d) and (e) As per the information furnished by the Director (Vigilance), Ministry of Environment and Forests, there is no case of involvement of any official of the Ministry of Environment and Forests in the illegal felling of trees during their tenure in the Ministry.

Rights of the Tribal and Traditional Forest Dwellers

3283. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) in how many States the right of the tribal and traditional forest dwellers has so far been exercised after notification of the concerning Act with effect from 1st January, 2008;

(b) whether those already evicted in different States owing to implication of the existing forest Act be taken into the purview of the present Act; and

(c) whether Government would provide financial help in strengthening the economy of those who have come under operation of this Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The Ministry of Tribal Affairs had written to the State/UT Governments on 11.1.2008 for constituting various Committees under the Act and for initiating necessary action for recognition and vesting of the forest rights in the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. The State/UT Governments are still in the process of implementing the provisions of the Act. No progress has been reported by the State/UT Governments regarding recognition of forest rights.

(b) As per Section 4(3) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, the recognition and vesting of forest rights under the Act to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers in respect of forest lands and their habitat is subject to the condition that Tribals had occupied forest land before the 13th day of December, 2005 and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers had occupied the land three generations before 13.12.2005.

(c) The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 does not envisage provision of financial help to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers whose forest rights are recognized under the Act.